THE LITHUANIAN WOMEN'S CULTURAL SOCIETY

This Society came into being in 1923. It did very distinguished work in the education of women. It founded a Teachers' Seminary for Women in Kaunas, two agricultural schools for girls and a school of domestic science. It opened kindergartens in various Lithuanian cities.

THE UNION OF LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

This union was formed on December 3, 1922. All the Catholic women's organizations in Lithuania belonged to it. The Union periodically convoked general conventions of Catholic women at which questions relating to important phases of women's activities were discussed. It also organized courses on social questions. In 1930 the Union was admitted to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

In celebrating its tenth anniversary, the Union convoked a convention in Kaunas in 1933, in which over 10,000 women took part. At these conventions, besides lectures on questions of cultural or social interest, there were always exhibits of art, the press, home industries, song, dance, and sport festivals. The purpose of the 1939 convention was to celebrate the Union's fifteenth anniversary. By that time the Union numbered 112,000 women. The last convention of the Union took place on May 12th and 13th, 1940, in the capital city of Vilnius. Thousands of women participated in this convention. Dressed in national costumes and carrying the banners of the different organizations, the women marched through the streets of Vilnius to pray at the Shrine of Our Lady, Protectress of Lithuania. The Shrine known as "Aušros Vartai" (The Gate of Dawn) is beloved of all Lithuanians. It stands in a niche above the ancient gate of the formerly walled city of Vilnius.

Because there was no hall large enough to contain the vast number of participants, the convention was opened in the beautiful square in front of the Cathedral of Vilnius. This convention worked under the sign of prayer because World War II was in progress. Barely a month later, the Soviet Union overran Lithuania and all public action was suppressed by the Communist régime of occupation.

LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS ABROAD

In 1944, when the Red Army began to reoccupy Lithuania, many leaders of Lithuanian organizations fled abroad because they knew that they, particularly, were threatened with liquidation at the hands of the Soviet occupants. But even in exile, they were determined that the organizations which had existed in Lithuania should not die but should be reconstituted.

Women who had been active in organizations in Lithuania got together in Germany in 1946, and, with the president of the Union of Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organizations, Mrs. M. Galdikienė, and the vice-president, Dr. V. Karvelienė, at their head, revived the Union. Later, the central secretariat of the Union was transferred to Paris, and, from there, in 1953 to New York, U.S.A.

The reconstituted Union links together all the Lithuanian Catholic women's societies in the free world. It belongs to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations. The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization Board of Directors, whose members reside in the United States, in France and in Canada, maintains relations with all the existing Lithuanian Catholic women's organizations; it transmits to them the W.U.C.W.O'S decisions and requests; it arranges symposiums, dialogs and commemorations; it convokes assemblies. The Board issues a news bulletin about women's activities in world affairs.

North America

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The American Lithuanian Roman Catholic Women's Alliance is a Fraternal Benefit Society under the patronage of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. It was founded in 1914. It has aid and insurance funds and an educational section. It has 74 branches. It publishes a monthly magazine called "Moterų Dirva" (Women's Field). Its branches contribute much aid to various Lithuanian undertakings. The Alliance awards two scholarships annually to college students.